

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Michael Honda (CA-15), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), issued the following statement today regarding Don Imus's comments about the Rutgers University women's basketball team:

"The comments made by radio personality Don Imus regarding the Rutgers University women's basketball team were racist, sexist, and completely inappropriate. Historically, Imus has made divisive and inflammatory statements against women, and racial and ethnic minority groups with little consequence.

"The female athletes of Rutgers University exhibited great strength, talent, and character necessary to advance to the NCAA women's championship game. Instead of celebrating their accomplishments, Imus made irrelevant, and blatantly racialized sexist remarks about the texture of their hair and referring to them using what might be the most derogatory term one may call any woman, regardless of her race.

"MSNBC and CBS Radio's sanctions are mere slaps on the wrist. A two-week suspension does nothing with respect to a personality such as Imus, who does not recognize or care to understand the damage that such stereotypes cause.

"Imus's public apology is insufficient. This was not an isolated incident, but reflects a pattern of divisive and inflammatory tactics silently endorsed by MSNBC and CBS Radio, who have not fired Imus in the past for similar comments. Mainstream networks should understand the wide influence they wield, and take responsibility to discourage such tactics that fail to help our society progress in a direction towards compassion and openness, but rather fuel racial and sexual stereotypes of the worst kind. I call for the immediate termination of Don Imus and his executive producer Bernard McGuirk."

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The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac> .